

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NATO 03273

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE 1977

REF: (A) STATE 107365 (DTG 122352Z MAY 77), (B) STATE
107370 (DTG 122345Z MAY 77)

1. THE ALLIES MAY BELIEVE, AS A RESULT OF OUR AGREEMENT TO THE SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON RESOURCES TO BE DEVOTED TO DEFENSE, THAT WE MAY BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT WATERED-DOWN LANGUAGE ON THIS POINT AT THE DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING. PARTICULARLY THE BRITISH WILL BE LOOKING FOR GREATER FLEXIBILITY THAN WE HAVE SHOWN HERETOFORE IN THE DPC, AND SECRETARY BROWN SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE BILATERALLY WITH MOD MULLEY, SYG LUNS AND OTHERS.

2. DURING MY DISCUSSION WITH SYG LUNS ON 13 MAY, WHEN I DELIVERED A COPY OF SECRETARY BROWN'S STATEMENT FOR THE DPC RECORD (REF A), HE MENTIONED HIS "CONCERN AND DISAPPOINTMENT" OVER US SUPPORT FOR THE "WEAKENED" LANGUAGE IN THE NAC COMMUNIQUE ON DEFENSE SPENDING. HE TOOK POSITION THAT US ACTION WAS A MAJOR CONCESSION TO THE UK POSITION AND SIGNALLED A MORE RELAXED ATTITUDE OVER DEFENSE
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SPENDING THAN THE ALLIES HAD ANTICIPATED. HE URGED IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THAT SECRETARY BROWN NOT FOLLOW A SIMILAR COURSE DURING THE DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING NEXT WEEK, WHICH WOULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFORTS TO GET THE ALLIES' DEFENSE BUDGETS ON AN UPWARD TREND.

3. THOUGH I DO NOT AGREE THAT OUR SUPPORT OF THE COMPRO-

MISE REACHED AT LONDON REPRESENTED AGREEMENT TO "WEAKENED" LANGUAGE, AS I TOLD LUNS, SOME MAY ALSO BE INTERPRETING IT AS A MAJOR US CONCESSION. I AGREE WITH LUNS THAT WE SHOULD INITIALLY APPEAR DETERMINED DURING THE DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE NEED FOR REAL INCREASES IN DEFENSE SPENDING ALONG THE LINES OF THE FORMULATION WE HAVE SUPPORTED, CALLING FOR "3 PERCENT ANNUAL REAL INCREASES." THUS, I RECOMMEND THAT DURING HIS BILATERAL MEETING WITH MOD MULLEY, SECRETARY BROWN EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING FOR THE UK ECONOMIC SITUATION, BUT STRESS THE NEED FOR THE UK TO SUPPORT COLLECTIVE ADOPTION OF A 3 PERCENT REAL INCREASE TARGET LEVEL. THEREAFTER, THE MINISTERS CAN NEGOTIATE A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD PRESERVE THE NOTION OF 3 PERCENT REAL ANNUAL INCREASES, PERHAPS QUALIFIED TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE SPECIAL BRITISH ECONOMIC SITUATION. SYMPATHETIC AS I AM TO BRITISH DIFFICULTIES, I DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD LET THEM SET THE PACE FOR THE REST OF THE ALLIES ON THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. BENNETT

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